



STATE OF TENNESSEE WAIVER REQUEST

Waiver Subject:

In-School Youth – Drive to 55 Initiatives

Statutory and Regulatory Requirement:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §129(a)(4) and 20 CFR 681.410 requires that the state and Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) spend not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of youth funds to provide services to out-of-school youth (OSY).

Background:

In the Combined State Plan, Tennessee submitted a thorough explanation of Governor Haslam's initiative to assist recent high school graduates the opportunity to attend a community or technical college free of tuition and mandatory fees. The Governor understands that education is the pipeline for success. He has made college access a priority by committing his assistance to Tennessee regions (East, West and Middle) raise their educational attainment rates and enhance their workforce development efforts through innovative public/private partnerships.

Tennessee Drive to 55 is a statewide initiative to equip fifty-five (55%) of Tennesseans with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025. Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect are two programs under the Drive to 55 initiatives which implement strategies and ensure access to a two year free tuition. Tennessee Promise offers eligible high school students two years of tuition-free at a community or technical colleges including a mentoring component to help them through the process. Currently Tennessee is the first initiator of this opportunity.

In an effort to coordinate with the Governor's vision for the education attainment of youth, Tennessee local development areas are providing WIOA funds to provide support services to students benefiting from these services. Complete TN's report, *Room to Grow* (2017) expressed the need for additional wrap-around services to help with students' success and free-tuition. With this in mind, Tennessee would like to count the successes of these students whether they are receiving credentials or certificate in the youth performance outcome. As WIOA is a mechanism for many services to come together and provide the needs of individuals, this is an opportunity for our program to assist those who need us to fulfill their other needs. While the financial burden and mandatory fees are covered by the Tennessee Promise scholarships, other burden such as child care, transportation and the



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cost of books and classroom fees are not covered and may be challenges to these students.

Waiver Request:

Request to waive the age of in-school-youth from age 21 to age 24 and count these students in performance measures if they are enrolled in Drive to 55 (Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect Programs) and are receiving WIOA support services.

Reason for the Request:

Currently, there are five hundred (500) out-of-school students participating in Tennessee Promise and Reconnect programs receiving support services from WIOA.

Actions Undertaken to Remove State or Local Statutory or Regulator Barriers:

Currently, no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers exist. The State of Tennessee regulation and policy statements are in compliance with current federal law.

Goals and Outcomes:

- Increase the number of youth receiving WIOA services while in other programs
- Provide information services about Tennessee Promise to OSY who would like to receive their high school diploma and participate in the Tennessee Promise program while receiving support services when needed
- Work closely with Tennessee Promise to collect data about youth who are receiving credentials and/or certificates and WIOA support services

Individuals impacted by this waiver:

- Youth in Drive Tennessee Promise receiving WIOA support services; WIOA service providers coordinating services with Tennessee Promise
- Tennessee Promise providers who will be reporting the number of youth referred to workforce services to receive support services



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Description of the Monitoring Process:

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) and LWDBs will be responsible for monitoring the number of students in Drive to 55 who received support services from each LWDA.

Opportunity for Local Board and Public Comment on Waiver Request:

The waiver request will be posted on the TDLWD's website for thirty (30) days and for public review and comment, and for comments from our partners. Consistent with general waiver request requirements, TDLWD is adhering to publication requirements to ensure the broadest participation possible including informing appropriate youth program partners such as schools, labor and community based organizations. This waiver has is developed in consultation with local boards.

Sources:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56cf531db6aa6036fa14e1f8/t/59484f881b631b8487c2a72e/1497911185461/Complete+Tennessee_Room+To+Grow-Regional+Perspectives.pdf